

## The C. I. A. Must Be Mysterious

The Central Intelligence Agency's intelligence may be suspect but it certainly is central to the search for the causes of the fouled-up attack on the Castro regime. The C. I. A.'s building has been picketed; there are rumors that it will be revamped, reports that some of its functions will be shorn away. The public at large, however, does not know enough about the C. I. A. to picket it or to pass on the need for any changes in its responsibilities, personnel or methods. And this is as it has to be if the C. I. A. is to work at all.

\* \* \*

It is not pleasant for Americans, nor in keeping with the nation's past practices, to realize that there is an agency of government which, in the nature of things, must work secretly,

cannot be held accountable in detail to Congress or public opinion, and yet has a vital role in national strategy

\* \* \*

But the world of 1961 is not the world that the United States knew in earlier eras. During most of this country's history, predatory powers hardly found it necessary to spy on the United States, and the United States, for its part, did whatever spying might be necessary on a purely improvised basis. When one realizes that General McClellan's chief source of military espionage was a "private eye" who organized a volunteer system of intelligence that, in the upshot, consistently misinformed the Union commander, it is plain that the American tradition concerning spying

and related activities has been erratic and amateurish. For that our forefathers could be profoundly thankful.

We, on the other hand, live in a time when espionage, conspiracy and subversion constitute major arms of a powerful state—the Soviet Union. Backed by great military power, these secret weapons have been instrumental in conquering a vast territory for communism and in disturbing the rest of the world. To counter such methods by conventional diplomacy and open resistance alone would be folly. If only to know what the enemies of freedom are plotting, the United States must have something like the C. I. A.—working in secret.

\* \* \*

Granting this need for a covert agency, outside the normal public controls, how is it to be reconciled with democratic government? Only through the clear assumption of responsibility by the Administration in office; only by the widest diffusion of non-secret information bearing on policy-making and obtaining the broadest possible consensus of policy itself. The President is answerable to Congress and the people for the acts, the efficiency and the use made of the C. I. A. He alone can assure that it does not take on an independent, dangerous life of its own but will always serve the interests of the United States and assist the government to pursue courses of which the people approve.